

## **Hong Kong Harmonica Community Connecting to the World**

While the history of harmonica in Hong Kong can be traced back to the pre-Second World War years whereas harmonica has a history of over 150 years, there had not been a close connection between the local harmonica community in Hong Kong and the rest of the world. There had been a couple of rare occasions of distinguished harmonica soloists visiting Hong Kong in the past 50 years. There were few harmonica players in Hong Kong interacting with the other parts of the World. As a matter of fact, in the 1960' s, a couple of local harmonica players had joined the World Harmonica Competition, which were judged only on the basis of tape recording (competitors mailed their recording on cassette tapes).

The First World Harmonica Competition and Festival, in the format as we know today, was held in 1987 in Jersey. After that, such festivals were held every 2 years in Trossingen of Germany (the home town of harmonica where the world' s most prominent harmonica maker was established) and Detroit of USA.

In 1995, the World Harmonica Festival was held in Yokohama of Japan, being the first time in Asia. King' s Harmonica Quintet of Hong Kong was present, being the first participants from Hong Kong since the festival was started in 1987. The astonishing ensemble music making and the marvelous results of the Quintet in the competition (in 1995, all 7 entries were awarded the first six positions, with 1 champion, 2 first runner-up' s and 1 second runner-up, while in 1997, the Quintet was awarded the world champion in the ensemble section) caught the attention of the harmonica communities from other countries and opened up the connection with them.

Subsequently, since the first Asia Pacific Harmonica Festival in 1996, the King' s Harmonica Quintet has been a regular invited guest to perform, adjudicate and hold workshops in the festival. The younger generation of Hong Kong harmonica players also demonstrated their high standard within the region through the competition. With these achievements, Hong Kong has thus become more well-known to the world as a city with vivid harmonica development.